

## Law of the Month – September 2017

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In the past month, Dodge County has seen more than its share of serious crashes. In many of these crashes, at least part of the cause was failure of one of the operators to properly stop at the posted stop sign. Law enforcement in rural areas eventually become all too familiar with the horrors that occur when two vehicle traveling at highway speeds collide. Unfortunately so do the friends and family of those harmed in these crashes. The saddest part about these incidents is that they are 100% preventable. They are generally caused by human error or inattentiveness.

Wisconsin Statute 346.46 covers what is required regarding properly stopping at posted stop signs. It says “(1)... every operator of a vehicle approaching an official stop sign at an intersection shall cause such vehicle to stop before entering the intersection and shall yield the right-of-way to other vehicles which have entered or are approaching the intersection upon a highway which is not controlled by an official stop sign or traffic signal.

**(2)** Stops required by sub. (1) shall be made in the following manner:

**(a)** If there is a clearly marked stop line, the operator shall stop the vehicle immediately before crossing such line.

**(b)** If there is no clearly marked stop line, the operator shall stop the vehicle immediately before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection.

**(c)** If there is neither a clearly marked stop line nor a marked or unmarked crosswalk at the intersection or if the operator cannot efficiently observe traffic on the intersecting roadway from the stop made at the stop line or crosswalk, the operator shall, before entering the intersection, stop the vehicle at such point as will enable the operator to efficiently observe the traffic on the intersecting roadway.”

The average reaction time of a person who is not distracted or impaired is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second. In that time, a vehicle travels 1.1 feet for every mph it is traveling. When you are in a rural setting that means that a vehicle traveling 55 mph will travel 60.5 feet before the driver even begins taking evasive action when someone pulls out in front of them from a stop sign.

Captain Scott Mittelstadt asks that all drivers make the conscious decision to make complete stops at all stop signs. You may save your own life or that of someone you love.